

City Sleuth Citation

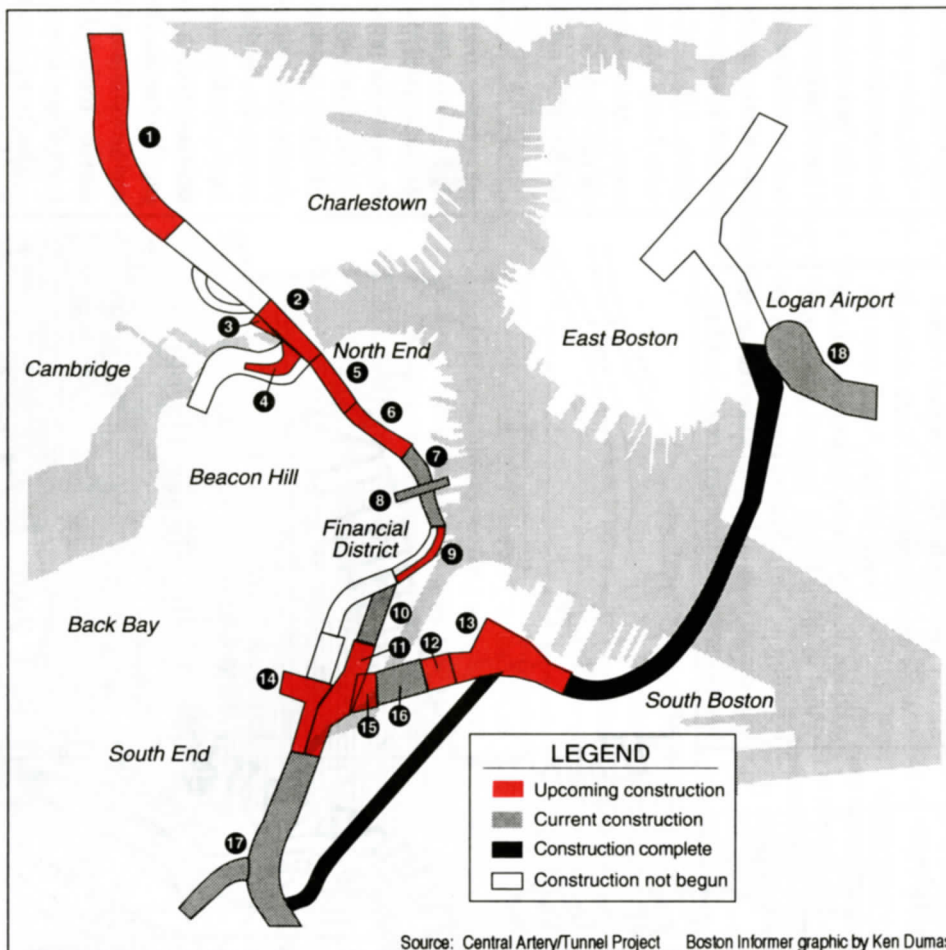
Annual awards on the landscape and cityscape

THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 32

The newsletter for people who care about Boston

July—August 1997



**The massive Central Artery/Tunnel project** has two completed elements, the Ted Williams Tunnel and South Boston Bypass Road connecting to I-93. Although reported in *The Boston Informer* in July 1992 that the northbound depressed Central Artery was supposed to open mid-1998, it is clear that the project is behind schedule. However, the level of construction activity is evidence progress is being made.

Six construction contracts are underway and 12 contracts are or will soon be under design (see map and table). Several areas are not assigned, including work in Charlestown and Logan Airport, that may be performed "by others," as they say.

#### CA/T tidbits:

The **Haymarket vent building** behind City Hall is under construction and includes a parking garage, office and retail space. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for leasing/operating the facility is on hold because of protests from the North End. Activists objected that the RFP did not mention longstanding commitments guaranteeing parking benefits for the community.

Cancelling controversial **Chinatown Ramp DD** (I-90 westbound traffic) will save the CA/T project \$30 million. Building a replacement ramp in Back Bay, however, will cost \$100 million and is in the distant future.

### Piece by Piece: Progress on the Central Artery/Tunnel project

	Contract	\$ Value (millions)	Completion Date
DONE	Ted Williams Tunnel and South Boston Bypass Road	\$1,800,000,000	Dec. 15, 1995
CURRENT	① I-93/Mass. Ave. Interchange (12A3)	\$159.9	August 2000
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	⑬ I-93 Mainline Bridge, Ramps over Charles River (19D1)	\$72 (est)	April 2002
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## People Movers

**Bryan Glascock**, executive director of the Air Pollution Control Commission (APCC) of the City of Boston's Environment Dept., has been awarded a one-year Jerome L. Rappaport, Sr., Boston Urban Fellowship at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He will return to the APCC next year.

**Hubert Murray**, formerly at Wallace, Floyd, Associates, has started his own firm.

**Mary McShane**, from Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates to CPTS.

**R. J. Lyman**, from private-sector law firm to assistant director of Environmental Affairs, MEPA unit chief.

**G. Prouty**, GSA architect and critic of City Hall Plaza renovation plans, has been relocated.

**Patrice Todisco**, has moved on from the Bureau of Transportation Planning and Development where she worked on the state's Scenic Byways programs.

**Kara Viola**, from Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, to Mass. Highway.

**Richard D. Lyons** is the new Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

**1** The John Hancock Insurance Co. is undertaking the first major redesign of its **John Hancock Tower**. Construction on renovations to make the plaza more pedestrian friendly by adding trees and other amenities is underway. High winds around the base of the tower have been a problem, and the redesign by Halvorson Company are expected to mitigate these to some extent.

**2 Commuter Alert: Updates on ferry services:** The MBTA initiated a new week-day-only ferry service from North Station (Lovejoy Wharf) to the World Trade Center on Sept. 15. The one-way fare is \$1; any MBTA pass Combo Plus or higher is valid. Water transportation from North Station to Charlestown began in July, but it does not continue directly from Charlestown to Long Wharf as often billed. Instead, passengers boarding at North Station for Long Wharf must change boats and pay an additional fare to take the existing Charlestown-Long Wharf ferry.

**3 City Hall Plaza Redesign...**By now everyone has been involved in the process for the redesign of City Hall Plaza, from the pigeons to President Clinton. Despite opposition to elements of the plan expressed by many designers, users, the GSA, and the Boston Civic Design Committee (BCDC), the Plaza redesign is going forward. Meetings in Washington with the GSA head and Trust for City Hall Plaza head Norman Leventhal may have helped progress.

However, the recent BCDC report, supported the "Concept Plan" goals but questioned the proposed Hanover Street extension, massing of the proposed 350-room hotel and potential prohibition on plaza use for noisy events.

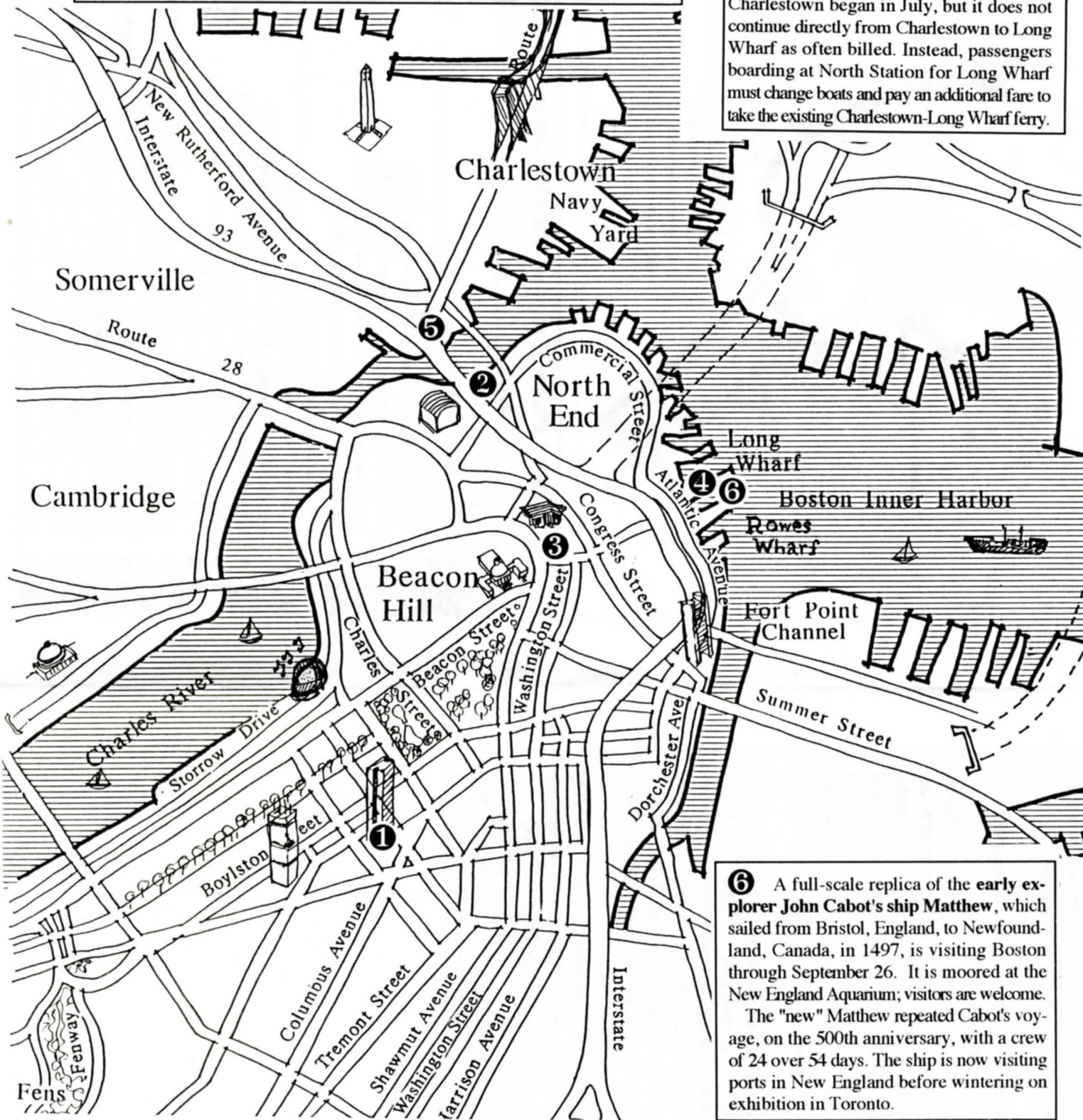
Yet, plans appear to be proceeding post haste once the issues were put into the hands of the "politicians and not the bureaucrats." Chan, Kreiger Associates and Hargreaves and Associates are now working on more substantive designs. Still to come, however, is input from the Citizens Advisory Committee. The CAC, appointed months ago with Larry Moulter as chair, has yet to meet....At issue for many is the question of the privatization of the Plaza versus retaining the public nature for the custody, ownership, management and maintenance.

**4** Work on the **MBTA Blue Line Aquarium and Maverick stations** is starting as part of the project to lengthen platforms on the Blue Line. The goal is to increase Blue Line capacity through six-car trains. A new west entrance for Aquarium station across the Surface Artery is also being built. To facilitate work on this much-delayed project, for seven weekends ending October 26, Maverick, Aquarium, State and Government Center will be closed and service replaced by shuttle bus service from Wood Island to Government Center.

The "new" Aquarium station will not be finished until 2004, and in the meantime the existing station seems to be being treated with benign neglect.

**5** Work has begun on renovations to the **Paul Revere Landing Park** on the west side of the Charlestown Bridge. This is part of an \$80 million Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) mitigation package to create new parks on the north bank of the Charles River near the two new proposed Charles River highway bridges. The park, designed by Carr, Lynch and Sandell, is scheduled for completion in July 1998. Unfortunately, a major CA/T haul road will run through the park until 2004, because access required during construction. Boston Sand and Gravel will also use it until a new access road to Rutherford Avenue farther north is built.

The interim access road will have traffic signals and crosswalks for pedestrian safety. After the CA/T project is complete, the road will become a 20-foot-wide pathway shared by pedestrians, bicycles, and MDC, MBTA and Mass. Highway maintenance vehicles.



**6** A full-scale replica of the early explorer **John Cabot's ship Matthew**, which sailed from Bristol, England, to Newfoundland, Canada, in 1497, is visiting Boston through September 26. It is moored at the New England Aquarium; visitors are welcome. The "new" Matthew repeated Cabot's voyage, on the 500th anniversary, with a crew of 24 over 54 days. The ship is now visiting ports in New England before wintering on exhibition in Toronto.

Public and private plans are making the Ruggles Street area the center of attention recently. The plagued **Ruggles Center project (Parcel 18)** is being sold to Northeastern University for academic and administrative functions. Northeastern will also donate space to nearby Whittier Street Health Center. The university plans to pursue building the hotel and parking garage historically planned for the site. The new **Boston Police Headquarters**, occupying the entire next door block between Columbus Avenue and Prentiss Street, will open for some personnel in September and will be fully operational in January 1998.

Across from the Police Headquarters is **Parcel 3**, planned for commercial and retail uses. The City of Boston and the community worked six months ago on the RFP which has not been issued yet. The state Division of Capital Planning and Operations is considering building a **swimming pool** behind the Reggie Lewis Track at Roxbury Crossing, using some of Parcel 3. The MBTA and Mass. Highway began work last year on **plans to widen Ruggles Street** between Huntington Avenue and New Tremont Street, but intense community opposition to more traffic and little for pedestrians and bicycles has delayed the design and led Mass. Highway to request four extensions for the environmental comment period.

**One is not enough...**Millennium Partners has a major proposal for Downtown Crossing, the Commonwealth Center project abandoned in the 1990s. The New York developer's local agent, Macomber Development Assoc., also behind office-retail complexes for the Greyhound site and Park Plaza II, filed a brief Notice of Project Change with state environmental officials. Millennium has also expressed interest in Fenway-area MassPike air rights.

The project is smaller than Commonwealth Center, with 850 rental units, a fitness club, a theater complex and 180,000 s.f. of retail instead of the mostly office use proposed before. The proponent stated the project change notice was submitted with a reservation of rights so the Commonwealth Center project can proceed as originally conceived if the new project is not approved. Because more than five years passed with no action on a project, state officials will determine if the lapse of time more than the revised program warrant additional work by the proponent. Architects are New Yorkers Gary Handel and Associates and Boston's CBT as associate architects.



Construction of the **South End Community Health Center/1601 Washington Street Development** is set to get underway. The project is located in Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) parcels in the South End, bounded by Washington Street, Shawmut Avenue, West Concord and Rutland streets.

The mixed-use development will consist of 10,000 s.f. of retail space including a large CVS store and an ATM; the South End Community Health Center; 39 condominium residences and a below-grade parking garage for 118 cars. In addition, 19 townhouses will be built on Cumston Street and Shawmut Avenue and some 5,000 s.f. of permanent open space/community gardens will be deeded to the Open Space Land Trust. Total built development will be about 130,000 s.f.

The project is being developed by South Park Associates and the Health Center. The architects are Rothman Partners and the construction manager is R. F. Walsh Associates, led by the former BRA head.

This project was originally a 1980s "linkage" parcel (remember that?), to be developed as "mitigation" for a proposed project at Park Plaza. Now it is proceeding ahead of the Park Plaza project.

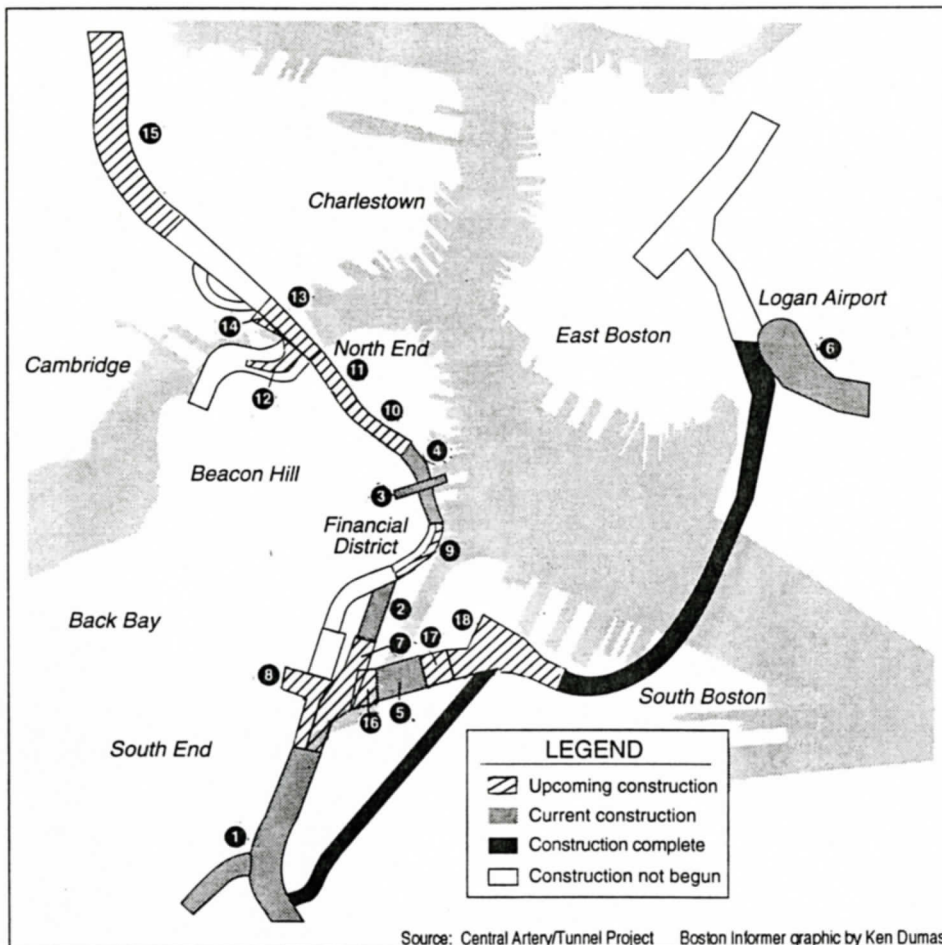


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## SORRY—WE GOOFED!

The numbers did not match the locations on the map at left—now they do.

If any of you spotted the error, let us know and we'll give a free, one-year subscription to the friend of your choice. Call The Boston Informer at (617) 723-3584 or fax: 437-1886.

Your contrite publishers,  
Chris Fincham  
Tony Casendino  
Anne McKinnon

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## Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

**The Boston Informer** is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

**The Boston Informer** is available by mail only. \$20.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-3584, fax (617) 437-1886 or e-mail: 103477.556@compuserve.com.



**Still seeking the mirage**

## THE BOSTON INFORMER

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## You were asking...

- Q. How come traffic still backs up at toll booths despite MassPike chairman James Kerasiotes' promise to "wave through," with no tolls, cars stuck in traffic jams?**
- A.** According to Robert Bliss, MassPike spokesman, it applies only to exit toll booths, off the main highway, when traffic is backed up onto the highway creating a safety hazard. State Police will decide when to wave people through. The policy does not apply to toll booths straddling the Turnpike (e.g., Sturbridge, Weston/Route 128, Allston). Just being stuck in line for unconscionable lengths of time does not qualify for a free pass.
- Q. What is a major health hazard now being posed by Central Artery construction?**
- A.** As major excavation begins downtown, airborne dust is becoming a serious health concern, according to the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Even if current airborne dust standards were met, DEP has stated that significant consequences such as respiratory illnesses and premature mortality can occur at levels below the standards.
- Q. I hear the design of the "last" statue for the Commonwealth Mall is underway. What will it be?**
- A.** The Boston Art Commission is planning to commemorate three women with a statue to be placed between Fairfield and Gloucester streets. The statue will feature Abigail Adams, Phyllis Wheatley and Lucy Stone.
- Q. Is Mayor Menino the first mayor to actively support building a pedestrian bridge over Congress Street at City Hall since John Collins?**
- A.** Yes. In fact, Mayor White cancelled plans for the bridge and Mayor Flynn never sought funds for construction.



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